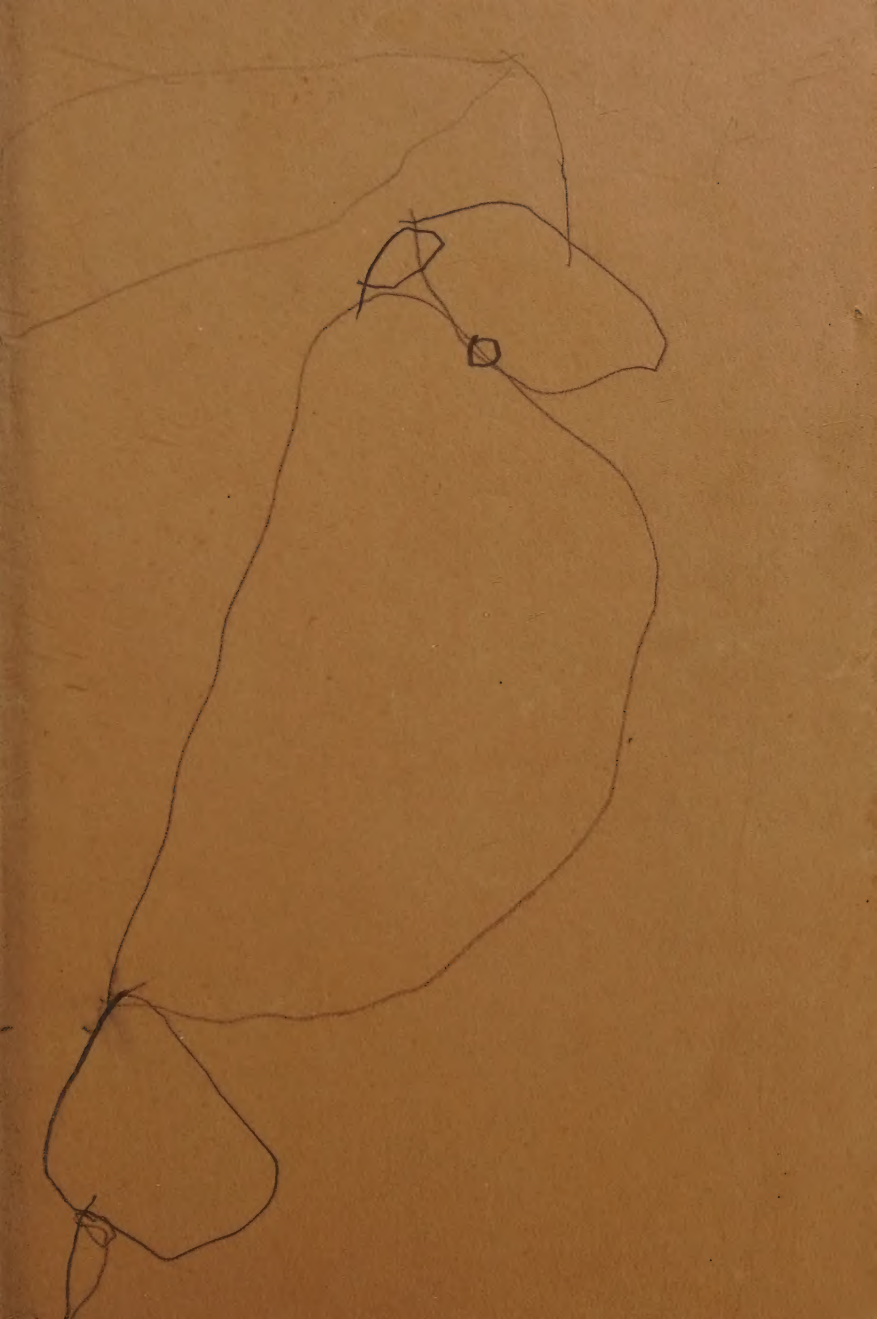
GOLDEN HAIR AND THE THREE BEARS

BY CLIFTON JOHNSON

BED-TIME WONDER TALES



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BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON

HOP-O'-MY-THUMB
THE BABES IN THE WOOD
THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER
THE FOX AND THE LITTLE RED HEN
GOLDEN HAIR AND THE THREE BEARS

CINDERELLA
PUSS IN BOOTS
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD
THE STORY OF CHICKEN-LICKEN

Additional books will be added
to this series from time to time.

BEDTIME WONDER TALES

GOLDEN HAIR AND THE THREE BEARS

BY

CLIFTON JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED BY

HARRY L. SMITH

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The books in this series of Bedtime Wonder Tales are made up of favorite stories from the folklore of all nations. Such stories are particularly enjoyed by children from four to twelve years of age. As here told they are free from the savagery, distressing details, and excessive pathos which mar many of the tales in the form that they have come down to us from a barbaric past. But there has been no sacrifice of the simplicity and humor and sweetness that give them perennial charm.

The sources of the stories in this volume are as follows: Page 11, England; 19, Scotland; 24, India; 45, American Negro; 53, China; 61, Spain; 66, Sweden; 76, Italy; 107, Ireland; 121, Wales; 125, Siam.

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GOLDEN HAIR AND THE THREE BEARS

I

IN THE BEARS' HOUSE

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Golden Hair who lived near a forest-covered mountain. Many pretty flowers grew in the woodland on the mountain side, and Golden Hair liked to gather them. Usually she did not go far from home after the flowers, but one day she rambled on and on, picking blossoms here and there, until she was much deeper in the forest than she had ever been before.

"Now I must go back," Golden Hair said

at last. "I didn't intend to come such a long way, and I'm tired and hungry."

Just then she looked on ahead up the lonely hollow into which she had wandered, and there among the trees she saw a nice little house.

"I didn't know any one lived here in the wood," Golden Hair said, "I will go and find out whose house this is."

So she ran to the door and rapped, but she got no response. Then she looked in at a window, and afterward she peeped in at the keyhole.

"Well," she said, "I don't see anybody, but the people who live here can't be far away, for I saw smoke coming out of the chimney. I suppose I might step in, if the door isn't locked."

She lifted the latch, and the door was not locked. So she went in and looked about. The room which she had entered was the

kitchen. At one side of it was a fireplace in which a log and some smaller sticks were smoldering. On a table were three bowls of porridge, each with a wooden spoon beside it. There was a big bowl, and a middle-sized bowl, and a little bowl.

"I think the people who live in this house have set the table for dinner," Golden Hair said. "If they were here I'm sure they would invite me to eat with them. Oh! how hungry I am. I don't suppose they would care if I ate some of their porridge without waiting till they come. I will taste it anyway."

So she went to the table and took a spoonful of porridge from the big bowl.

"This is too hot," she said, "I will try the next."

Then she took a spoonful of porridge from the middle-sized bowl.

"This is too cold," she said.

Then she took a spoonful of porridge from the little bowl, that was neither too hot nor too cold, but was just right, and she ate the porridge in the little bowl all up.

"Now I must sit down to rest for a while," Golden Hair said.

Along the wall were three chairs and each chair had a cushion in it. There was a big chair, a middle-sized chair, and a little chair. She tried the big chair, but its cushion was too hard for her.

"Dear me!" Golden Hair said, "this chair won't do at all. I will try the next."

Then she sat down in the middle-sized chair.

"This cushion is too soft," she said.

Then she tried the little chair, and it suited her to perfection. The cushion in it was neither too hard nor too soft, but was just right. She had settled herself in it to enjoy a good rest, when crack, smash! the

chair broke, and Golden Hair tumbled to the floor.

"That was a nice little chair," she said as she picked herself up. "I'm sorry it is broken. How am I to rest now? I don't like the other chairs. Perhaps I had better lie down and have a nap. I must see where the beds are."

Another room adjoined the one in which Golden Hair had eaten the little bowl of porridge and broken the little chair. She went into it, and found three beds—a big bed, and a middle-sized bed, and a little bed.

"I'm all right now," Golden Hair said, and she tried the largest bed, but it was too high at the head for her.

Then she tried the middle-sized bed.

"This is too high at the foot," she said.

Lastly she tried the little bed. That was neither too high at the head nor too high at the foot, but just suited her. She lay down

on it, covered herself up, and fell fast asleep.

The house that Golden Hair was in belonged to three bears—a big bear, a middle-sized bear, and a little bear. Shortly before Golden Hair rambled into the glen where the three bears lived, they had cooked their porridge for dinner and set it on the table. Then, while the porridge was cooling, they had gone out for a little walk.

Golden Hair was asleep when the bears came home. As soon as they entered the kitchen and looked at the table they saw that things were not as they had left them. Their wooden spoons were now in their bowls instead of lying on the table.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY PORRIDGE!" the big bear growled in his great gruff voice.

"AND SOMEBODY HAS BEEN TASTING MY PORRIDGE!" the middle-sized bear grumbled.

"*And somebody has been tasting my por-*

ridge, and eaten it all up!" the little bear piped.

"We will look around," they said, "and see if there has been any more meddling."

They turned to where they kept their chairs ranged along the wall.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" the big bear growled in his great gruff voice, for Golden Hair had pushed the hard cushion out of place.

"AND SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" the middle-sized bear grumbled, for Golden Hair had flattened down the soft cushion.

"And somebody has been sitting in my chair, and broken it all to pieces!" the little bear piped.

Then they went into their bedroom, and saw that the quilts and pillows on the beds bad been disarranged.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING ON

MY BED!" the big bear growled in his great gruff voice.

"AND SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING ON MY BED!" the middle-sized bear grumbled.

"And somebody has been lying on my bed, and here she is!" the little bear piped.

The voice of the little bear was so sharp and shrill it awakened Golden Hair at once. She sat bolt upright and stared at the three bears, and they stared at her.

They were standing in a row on one side of the bed, and Golden Hair tumbled herself out on the other side before they could catch her. Luckily, the window was open, and out she leaped. Then she ran home as fast as she could go, and she never again went near the place where the three bears lived.

II

THE BOASTFUL ROOSTER

ONCE upon a time there was a rooster who was very proud of his strong legs and bright feathers and red comb. But most of all he was proud of his powerful voice.

As he strutted around the barnyard he stopped every now and then to crow and to say to himself, "I am the handsomest rooster in all the world, and no other rooster lives who can crow as loud as I can."

One morning while he was strutting around as usual and making more noise than all the rest of the barnyard people put together, a brown hen came and spoke to him.

"What a lovely day this is," she said. "The sun shines bright, and all the birds are

singing. Let us fly over the fence and hunt for worms in the garden."

"All right," the rooster agreed.

Then they flew over the fence and soon were busy in the garden looking for worms.

It happened that a sly old fox was lurking near by. He saw the rooster and said to himself: "That fellow is just what I want for my dinner. I wish he would come over here where I am hiding in the bushes, so I could pounce on him. But there he is scratching around in the middle of the garden. I shall have to go out in the open and speak to him."

So the fox walked toward the rooster. The rooster and the hen saw him coming, and they took care to keep at a safe distance.

"Don't be afraid, Mr. Rooster," the fox said. "I want to have a friendly chat with you."

"Very well," the rooster responded; "I

don't object to visiting with you, if only you don't come any nearer."

"Your suspicions hurt my feelings," the fox told him. "But never mind. I wanted to ask you how many tricks you could do?"

"I can do three tricks," the rooster said. "How many can you do?"

"Three score and thirteen," the fox declared.

"Can you?" the rooster said. "I wouldn't have thought it. And what is the best one of all?"

"Oh! that is one my grandfather taught me," the fox answered. "He could shut both eyes and give a great shout, and I learned to do the same thing."

"Why, that's nothing! I could do that myself," the rooster bragged.

"Do you really think you could?" the fox asked. "Try it."

So the rooster swelled out his breast and

crowed as loud as he could, "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

Then he flapped his wings as if he had done a great thing. But he only shut one eye, for he wanted to watch the fox with the other.

"Very pretty," the fox commented—"almost as pretty as when the parson preaches in church. However, you didn't shut both eyes. I hardly thought you could do the trick as well as my grandfather did."

"Yes, I can too!" the rooster affirmed.

So eager was he to prove his ability that he forgot the need of caution, closed both eyes, and crowed, "Cock-a-doodle——"

But he never finished the crow, for as soon as his eyes were shut, the sly fox leaped forward, gripped him by the neck, and started to run to the woods.

The brown hen gave chase at once, crying: "Let go of that rooster! He belongs to me!"

"Mr. Fox," the rooster said, "that brown hen can run very fast. Do you know what it is to be henpecked? I do, and it is far from pleasant, I assure you. If you don't want her to catch up with us and peck you, I advise you to call back: 'This rooster is not yours. He is mine.' "

The fox found it slow work lugging along the heavy rooster, and he did not wish to be pecked. He thought the plan suggested by the rooster was a very good one. So he opened his mouth to shout back to the hen that the rooster was his.

But in doing that he let go his grip on the captive's neck. No sooner did the rooster find himself at liberty than he flew up into a tree. Then he shut both eyes and gave a loud crow. And that is all there is to this story.

III

SIR BUZZ

ONCE upon a time a soldier died, leaving a widow and one son. They were dreadfully poor, and at last matters became so bad that they had nothing left in the house to eat.

Then the son said, "Mother, give me four shillings, and I will go to seek my fortune in the wide world."

"Alas!" the mother sighed, "I haven't a farthing with which to buy bread, and where am I to get four shillings?"

The son said no more. Later in the day, when he was looking over an old coat of his father's and considering whether he could wear it himself, he discovered six shillings in one of the pockets.

"More than I bargained for!" the lad said, laughing. "See, mother, here are six shillings. Two are for you, and the rest will pay my way until I make my fortune."

So he started on his travels. After a while, as he was passing along the borders of a wood, he saw a tigress lying under a tree licking her paw and moaning as if in pain. He was about to run away when the tigress called to him faintly, saying, "Good lad, if you will take out this thorn for me, I shall be forever grateful."

"You needn't expect me to do such a thing," the lad said. "Why, if I begin to pull it out, and it hurts you, you will kill me with a pat of your big paw."

"No, no!" the tigress declared. "I will turn my face to the tree near me, and will pat that when the pain comes."

Such an arrangement seemed satisfactory. So the soldier's son went and sat down by

the tigress and pulled out the thorn. At the same moment the creature gave the tree a blow that split the trunk all to pieces.

Then she turned toward the soldier, and handed him a small box. "This is your reward," she said, "but do not open the box until you have gone nine miles."

He thanked the tigress, and resumed his travels. As he went on, the box grew heavier and heavier. By the time he had gone six miles it was a troublesome burden. However, he toiled slowly on two miles more.

Then he exclaimed: "I believe that tigress is a witch and has played a trick on me! I will stand this no longer. Heaven knows what is in the old box. I don't care, and here I will leave it."

So saying, he flung the box down on the ground. It burst open with the shock, and out stepped a little old man. He was only twenty inches high, and he had a beard which

The box bursts open

reached nearly to his feet. The manikin began immediately to stamp about and scold the lad roundly for throwing down the box so violently.

The soldier's son was scarcely able to restrain a smile at the ridiculous little figure. "Upon my word!" he said, "you are weighty for your size, old gentleman. What may your name be?"

"It is Sir Buzz!" the manikin snapped, still stamping around in a great rage.

"Well," the soldier's son said, "if you are all the box contained, I am glad I didn't carry it any farther."

"You are not very polite," the manikin snarled. "Perhaps, if you had carried it the full nine miles, you would have found something better, but I'm good enough for you, and will serve you faithfully."

"Serve me!" the soldier's son exclaimed —"then I wish to goodness you would serve

me with some dinner. for I am mighty hungry."

No sooner had the soldier's son said this, than with a *whiz! boom! bing!* like a big bee, Sir Buzz flew through the air to a confectioner's shop in the nearest town. He walked in, and cried in his loudest voice, "Ho! Mr. Confectioner, I want sweets."

The confectioner looked around the shop, and out of the door, and down the street, but could see no one.

Sir Buzz grew angry. He ran and pinched the confectioner's legs, and kicked his feet, shouting, "Impudent knave! do you mean to say you can't see me?"

The confectioner apologized humbly, and hurried to bring out his best sweets. Sir Buzz chose a hundred weight of the sweets. and paid for them. "Now be quick," he said. "Tie up the sweets, and I'll carry them away."

"They will be a heavy load for you," the confectioner told him.

"What business is that of yours, I would like to know?" Sir Buzz retorted. "Do as you are told."

"As you please, sir, the confectioner responded, and he tied up the sweets in a huge bundle. Sir Buzz took the bundle, and with a *boom! bing!* he whizzed off out of the door.

Next he stopped at a grocer's shop, and called out at the top of his voice, "Ho! Mr. Grocer, bring me flour."

When the grocer looked around the shop and out of the window and down the street without seeing anybody, the twenty-inch manikin with the long beard got into a violent rage. He ran and bit and kicked the unfortunate grocer's legs, saying, "Wretched varlet, don't pretend that you can't see me!"

The grocer was a good deal alarmed by

this onslaught. He hastily apologized, and asked Sir Buzz how much flour he wanted.

"A hundred weight," the manikin replied. "Put it in a bag, and I'll take it with me."

"Doubtless your honor has a cart or a beast of burden with you," the grocer said; "for a hundred weight would be a heavy load for you to carry otherwise."

"What is that to you," Sir Buzz shrieked, stamping his foot.

Then the grocer put the flour in a bag, which he placed on the manikin's shoulder, fully expecting it would crush him. But Sir Buzz grasped it firmly, picked up the bundle of sweets, and flew away—*boom! bing! boom!*

The soldier's son was just wondering what had become of his little servant, when, with a whir, the manikin alighted beside him. Sir Buzz wiped his face as if he were hot and tired. "Now I do hope I've brought you

enough," he said, "but you men have terrible appetites."

"You've brought more than enough, I should say," the lad laughed, looking at the huge bundle.

Then Sir Buzz made all the flour into cakes; and baked them. The soldier's son ate three and a handful of sweets, while the twenty-inch manikin gobbled up the rest, saying at each mouthful, "You men have such terrible appetites!"

IV

PRINCESS BLOSSOM

In the days that followed, the soldier's son and his servant, Sir Buzz, traveled on and on until they came to the city of the king. The king had a daughter called Princess Blossom, who was very beautiful. It so happened that the soldier's son chanced to catch a glimpse of the fair princess.

At once he fell desperately in love with her. He would neither eat nor sleep, and did nothing but say to his faithful manikin, "O dearest Sir Buzz, O kind Sir Buzz, carry me to the Princess Blossom that I may see and speak to her. Nothing else will satisfy me."

"You would only get yourself into

trouble," Sir Buzz responded; and he refused to do as his master wished.

But at last, he saw that the soldier's son was growing pale and pining away with thinking of the princess. Late that night he concluded to resist the lad's pleading no longer. So he bade him sit on his hand, and with a tremendous *boom! bing! boom!* they whizzed away. A second later they were at the palace in the chamber of the princess.

The booming wakened her, and she was much alarmed to see a handsome young man kneeling beside her. She was about to scream when the soldier's son with the greatest politeness and in the most elegant language, begged her not to be frightened. Then they talked to each other about everything delightful, while Sir Buzz stood near the door and acted as sentry.

At length Sir Buzz noticed that the dawn was coming, and he said to himself: "Now

what is to be done? If my master remains here, he will be discovered and killed as sure as my name is Buzz."

He went to the young people and explained the danger.

"I will not be parted from the princess, come what may," the soldier's son declared.

"Nor will I be parted from this courteous young man," the princess said with equal decision.

"Then I must carry both of you to a place of safety," Sir Buzz told them.

He and his master went outside while the princess got ready to leave the palace. As soon as she joined them, Sir Buzz took her on one hand and the soldier's son on the other hand. Then away he went to a large garden that belonged to the king, outside of the city. There he set the lovers down in the shelter of a big tree, and they went on talking.

"They can think of nothing but each other," he muttered, "and I must see that no harm comes to them."

So saying, he pulled up a straight sturdy tree, put it over his shoulder, and marched back and forth keeping guard at the garden gate.

Before long the whole city was in commotion because the Princess Blossom had been carried off. Every one turned out to look for her. By and by the chief constable came riding on his horse to the garden gate.

"What do you want here?" valiant Sir Buzz cried, making passes at him with the tree.

The chief constable, who could see nothing except the leafy branches of the tree threatening him, replied sturdily, "I want the Princess Blossom."

"I'll blossom you!" the manikin yelled. "Get away from my garden, will you?"

And he belabored the constable's pony with the tree so that the creature bolted away, nearly throwing its rider.

The constable went straight to the king, and said, "I am convinced that the Princess Blossom is in your Majesty's garden just outside of the city; for at the garden gate is a tree which fights terribly."

The king had all his horses and men gotten ready, and they went to the garden and tried to get in. But Sir Buzz behind the tree drove them off in great disorder.

The noise of the battle brought the two lovers to the scene just after Sir Buzz had routed his opponents. "We are sure that we can no longer exist apart," the princess told him, " and we have decided to go together to dwell in some other country."

"Yes, that is what we will do," the soldier's son added. "I feel that my fortune is as good as made now that I have won

the princess. So I shan't need you any more, and you can return whence you came."

"Pooh!" Sir Buzz exclaimed, "that is just like young people. However, have your own way; only take this hair which I pull from my beard, and burn it in the fire if you get into trouble. That will bring me to your aid."

Then Sir Buzz boomed off.

V

FIGHTING AN OGRE

THE soldier's son and the Princess Blossom traveled in company, and for a time all went well with them. But at last they lost their way in a forest, where they wandered for several days without food. They were nearly starved when a priest found them.

After he had heard their story, he said: "Alas! you poor children. Come home with me, and I will give you something to eat."

Had he said, "I will eat you," it would have been nearer the truth; for he was no priest, but a dreadful ogre, who delighted to devour handsome young men and maidens.

As to that the lovers knew nothing, and

they went home with him rejoicing that they were to have food and shelter.

The priest was very polite, and after he had taken them to his house, he said: "I shall have to leave you here for a while. An important errand will take me away till toward nightfall. Meanwhile make yourselves comfortable, and select from my supply of food whatever best suits you. Here are my keys. You can open all my cupboards except the one with the golden lock."

The priest went out, and the young people began to open the cupboards. In some they found food, which they ate with relish, and in others they found beautiful sets of dishes, and in still others lovely jewels and rich dresses and bags of money.

Finally, curiosity got the better of discretion, and, regardless of the priest's warning, the soldier's son said, "I will see what won-

derful things are hidden in the cupboard with the golden lock."

He opened it, and lo! it was full of human bones. At this dreadful sight he exclaimed to the princess: "We are lost, we are lost! This is not the house of a priest, but of a horrid ogre."

"If Sir Buzz were here, he might save us," the princess said. "Let me take the hair he gave you."

As she spoke, they heard footsteps approaching. The princess, who was very brave and kept her wits about her, had barely time to thrust the hair into the fire, when the door opened. It was not the priest who entered, but the ogre with sharp teeth and fierce eyes.

But the selfsame instant a *boom! boom! binging* noise was heard in the air coming nearer and nearer. The ogre knew very well the meaning of this sound. In order

to defend himself, he rushed out and changed into a heavy rain pouring down in torrents which he hoped would drown Sir Buzz.

Sir Buzz saved himself by changing into a gale of wind and beating back the rain.

Then the ogre changed into a dove and fled to the palace of the king. Sir Buzz pursued in the form of a hawk. He was about to overtake the dove, when it dashed into the palace, changed into a rose, and fell in the king's lap.

The king was listening to a bard who was thrumming a guitar. Quick as thought, Sir Buzz changed into an old musician, and approached the bard. "Brother," he said, "you are tired. Let me play."

The bard handed him the guitar, and the old musician played so wonderfully and sang with such sweetness that all who heard were charmed. When he paused, the king said: "What shall I give you as a reward?

Name what you please, and I assure you it shall be yours."

"I only ask the rose that is in your Majesty's lap," Sir Buzz replied.

"I had rather you asked either more or less," the king told him. "It is only a rose, yet it fell from heaven. However, it is yours."

So saying, he threw the rose toward the old musician, but before Sir Buzz could grasp it the petals loosened and dropped in a shower on the floor. Sir Buzz went down instantly on his knees to gather them up.

Yet, quick as he was, he failed to secure one petal, and that petal changed into a mouse. The mouse started to run. Then, with the speed of lightning, Sir Buzz turned into a cat, which caught the mouse and gobbled it up.

All this time the Princess Blossom and the soldier's son were in the ogre's house, shiver-

ing with fear while they awaited the issue of the combat. Suddenly they heard a *bing! boom!* and Sir Buzz arrived victorious.

He shook his head, and said: "You two had better not wander around in the world any more. You are not fitted to take care of yourselves."

Then he gathered together all the ogre's jewels and gold into a big bag, which he took in one hand, and he picked up the young people with the other. After that he whizzed away to the home of the soldier's widow. She was delighted to see her son again, and scarcely less pleased with the princess who came with him.

Sir Buzz did not even wait till the greetings were over. He set down the bag of treasure, and whizzed away with a *boom! bing! boom!* He was never seen nor heard of afterward. The soldier's son and the

princess soon married, and as the bag brought from the ogre's furnished them with all the wealth they knew what to do with, they were sure they would be happy as long as they lived.

VI

THE LITTLE TAR MAN

Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Wolf were neighbors. One day, when they met on the road, Mr. Wolf said: "I'm going to dig a well, and I want you to help me. After we get it dug, we will share the water together."

But Mr. Rabbit said, "No, I don't want any well. I'm satisfied to get up early in the morning and drink the dew off from the grass just as I always have."

So Mr. Wolf went and dug his well without any help. Time passed along, and there came a very dry spell. The rain didn't fall, and it kept on not falling. There was not even any dew. Nearly all the springs and brooks and creeks entirely dried up, and the

creatures could hardly find water enough to keep from perishing.

Mr. Wolf was more lucky than most, for though the water in his well got very low, it never quite failed. Presently Mr. Rabbit began to slip around to Mr. Wolf's well every night to get some water to cook with and to drink.

In the morning Mr. Wolf would find that all the water had been drawn out, and he was very angry. He saw Mr. Rabbit's tracks, and he studied to contrive a way to catch him.

By and by he took some rags and twisted and tied them up into the likeness of a little man. Then he daubed the whole over with pine tar, which is the stickiest stuff on the face of the earth. After the little tar man was finished, Mr. Wolf set him up by the well, and put the drinking gourd in his hand.

That night Mr. Rabbit came around as

usual just before sunrise, and when he saw the little tar man he was astonished. He stopped. Then he came closer, and looked at the little tar man, and waited for him to get out of the way.

But the little tar man took no notice of Mr. Rabbit—not even when Mr. Rabbit winked his eye at him. He didn't move, and he didn't say anything.

So Mr. Rabbit thought he would speak first. "Good morning, Mr. Man," he said.

But the little tar man didn't say anything, and Mr. Rabbit spoke again. "Mr. Man," he said, "I wish you would stand to one side and let me go to the well. I want to get some water. Don't you know that I'm in a hurry?"

Still the little tar man didn't answer; and Mr. Rabbit said. "Give me the gourd, please, sir."

The little tar man just stood there and

kept his mouth shut. Mr. Rabbit began to lose his temper. "I say, give me the gourd, or I'll hit you directly. Do you see this right hand of mine? Let me get some water, or I'll slap you over!"

The little tar man made no response. Then Mr. Rabbit doubled up his fist, hauled off, and struck the tar man on the side of his head, bim! "Take that for your manners," he said.

But his fist stuck, and when he tried to pull it back he could not. "Ho!" he exclaimed, "you think you will hold me? Take care! I have another hand here, and I'll box the wits out of you with it."

The little tar man didn't say anything, and Mr. Rabbit struck him with his second fist, blip! and that stuck.

"What do you mean—holding me?" Mr. Rabbit cried. "You turn me loose or I'll kick you."

Then he kicked and lost the use of his right foot, and he shouted: "What are you up to—acting this way? You've got to do different, or I'll hit you with my other foot. You'd better let go."

He kicked, and the left foot stuck the same as the right one. Mr. Rabbit was in great trouble now. "Hey! you think you'll hold me?" he snorted. "I have a tail. If I hit you with that tail it'll make a hole in you."

The little tar man held fast and didn't say anything. Then Mr. Rabbit hit him with his tail and got it stuck. "Lord, Lord!" Mr. Rabbit cried, "you're the worst man that ever I've seen. I tell you for the last time to let me go, or I'll bust you wide open with my head."

But the little tar man held him fast, and didn't say one word. Then Mr. Rabbit butted and got his head stuck. He was scared as well as vexed. Yet he didn't give

up. He kept right on scolding, biting, and wriggling; and he made an awful racket.

By and by Mr. Wolf came out of his house and found him there. "Oh! you're the fellow who stole my water," Mr. Wolf said. "Now that I've caught you I'll teach you a lesson. I'm going to give you the biggest whipping you ever had in all your days."

Mr. Rabbit begged to be let off, and he promised never to take water from Mr. Wolf's well any more.

But Mr. Wolf only laughed at him. He loosed him from the tar man, and tied him to a tree. Then he went off in the woods to cut some switches with which to beat him.

He hadn't been gone more than two minutes when Mr. Bear came along the road. Mr. Bear saw Mr. Rabbit tied to the tree, and he asked: "What's the matter, Mr. Rabbit? What are you doing there?"

"I'm waiting for something to eat," Mr. Rabbit replied.

"What are you going to eat?" Mr. Bear inquired.

"Well," Mr. Rabbit said, "the folks who tied me here told me they were going to make me eat a whole pig, two lambs, and ten loaves of bread."

Mr. Bear was hungry, and he said: "That would about suit me, Mr. Rabbit. But you are too small for so much."

"That's just what I was thinking," Mr. Rabbit agreed. "So if you want to do the eating, you can take my place."

Mr. Bear said he was willing. So he untied Mr. Rabbit, and then Mr. Rabbit tied Mr. Bear to the tree. After that Mr. Rabbit went off home.

Of course Mr. Bear got the whipping, and he didn't get the pig and lambs and ten loaves of bread. Afterward he wanted to

be revenged on Mr. Rabbit, but Mr. Rabbit was always playing his tricks on the other creatures and getting off unpunished, and he was much too active in wits and body for Mr. Bear to get the better of him.

VII

FIVE QUEER BROTHERS

ONCE there was a woman who had five sons. They looked just alike when they were boys, and they continued to look just alike when they grew up. Yet in spite of their looking just alike, in some other ways they were not alike at all.

The eldest could gulp up the ocean at a mouthful. The flesh of the second was harder than steel. The third could lengthen and shorten his legs as much as he pleased. He could make them miles long if he chose. No heat could affect the fourth. The fifth could live without breathing.

But they all concealed these peculiar powers, and the neighbors never suspected that

the five brothers were different from ordinary folk.

The eldest supported the family by fishing. He went alone to the sea and always came home heavily loaded. The neighbors often besought him to teach their sons how to fish, and at last he let several of their boys go with him to learn the art.

When they reached the shore he said to them: "I am going to take the sea into my mouth. As soon as I have done so you must hurry to collect the fish on the muddy bottom. I cannot hold the water long, and the moment you see me beckoning you must return."

So saying, he sucked up the sea, and the boys went to get the fish. When he was tired of holding the water, he motioned to them to return, but they were playing among strange objects and did not heed him. Soon he could contain the sea no longer. He

had to let it flow back into its former basin, and the boys were drowned.

On his way home the parents came out of their cottages to ask how many fish their boys had caught. He told them what had happened, and they dragged him before a magistrate.

"This man drowned our children when they went fishing with him," they affirmed.

"I did not ask them to go with me," he said. "It was only because of their parents' repeated urging that I allowed them to go. I sucked up the water so they could walk on the ocean bed. When it was time for them to return I did my utmost to induce them to come back. I held the water as long as I could and then had to put it in the sea basin because there was nothing else that would contain it."

"But you took the boys away and did not bring them back," the judge said. "There-

fore you are responsible for their death, and your head shall be cut off."

"Sir," the prisoner said, "before I am executed, I entreat you to let me go and bid my aged mother farewell."

The request was granted, and when the man reached home and told what had happened the second brother, whose flesh was harder than steel, insisted on returning in his stead. This brother presently appeared before the judge and said, "I thank you, sir, for allowing me to visit my home for a last time. Now I am ready to die."

He knelt with bowed head, and the executioner gave a sturdy slash with his sword that would have gone through any ordinary man's neck. But the sword was bent and its edge turned, while the neck was not even bruised.

A second sword, and a third of finer steel, were brought and tried. However, they

served no better than the first, and were spoiled without accomplishing anything.

So the constable took the man back to the judge, and told him that the fellow could not be decapitated.

"Well," the judge responded, "if we can't cut off his head I decree that he shall be dropped into the ocean which covers his victims."

"Sir," the man said, "I took leave of my mother supposing that my head was to be cut off. Now if I am to be drowned, surely you will let me go to her and make known my fate and get her blessing anew."

Permission was given, and he went and told his brothers how he had fared. Then the third brother, who could lengthen and shorten his legs, took the place of the second and went to the judge. The magistrate ordered the constable to drown him at once.

They escorted him to the seashore, put

him in a boat, and rowed far out. Then they threw him overboard, but he simply stretched his legs till they touched bottom. Thus he was able to stand with his head in the air.

The constable hauled him into the boat and took him farther from the land. Again they threw him into the sea, and again his extensible legs enabled him to stand on the bottom with his head above water.

Once more they got him into the boat, and labored at the oars till they were where the sea was very deep indeed. They tossed him in, but his head did not go under and he stood on the bottom with no more difficulty than before.

Therefore they brought him back to the judge, reported what had been done, and declared that some other method of punishing him must be found.

Then he was condemned to be boiled in

oil. While the cauldron was being heated he was permitted to go home and tell his mother of the latest failure to destroy him and of the manner in which he was now to meet death.

His brothers heard his story, and the fourth one, whom no heat could affect, went to bear the penalty of the law. But when this brother was put in the kettle of boiling oil he disported himself as if in a comfortable bath. He even asked the executioners to stir up the fire a little to increase the warmth.

They took him out instead, and locked him up in prison to wait while some other method of destroying him was devised. This time the judge, the bereaved parents, and the people united in an effort to invent a sure way of putting him to death.

They finally decided to smother him in a vast cream-cake. The whole country round

contributed flour and sugar, and a great oven was built in an open field.

Meanwhile the prisoner was allowed to go and bid his mother farewell, and the fifth brother, who could live without breathing, secretly became his substitute. When the cake was done, a multitude of people, with oxen, horses, and ropes, dragged it to the execution ground. There the culprit was interned within it.

As he was able to exist without air he rested peacefully till the next midnight. Then he crawled forth and returned home, where he and the other remarkable brothers dwelt happily for many years.

VIII

THE GRAZIER'S WIFE

THERE was a house in a certain valley in Spain, long ago, which was the home of a grazier who had a wife named Barbara. The grazier spent most of his time on the mountain-sides tending his herds.

He was famous for his valor in encountering wolves, and no man in the region was his match in handling the quarter-staff. Moreover, so expert was he with a sling, that he could hurl a stone a distance of a hundred yards and kill a deer by hitting it between the eyes. He was equally skillful with his knife, and he was greatly feared in a quarrel.

Yet in spite of all his prowess and courage,

he quailed before his wife Barbara. She was no longer young and whatever beauty she may have had was a thing of the past, but she was a woman of whom all her acquaintances stood in awe. No other woman ever possessed such a tongue, and she always had much to say when she visited her husband where he was tending his herds on the uplands.

He often prayed to the saints for relief, but she continued both to plague him with her tongue and to mark him with her nails. At last he applied for advice to a wizard who lived in a secluded mountain glen.

He had begun telling of his troubles, when the wizard interrupted him, saying: "I see plainly that you are complaining bitterly. But I would have you know that I am deaf, and no matter how violently you shout and jump and gesture, what you say or do has no effect on me. Nevertheless, let me inform

you that if you have some bright yellow gold to bestow on me, you will be heard and understood. Yes, then I would hear and comprehend, even if you were dumb and had no voice whatever."

"I will hasten to the market," the grazier said, "and sell some of my finest beasts, and the money that I receive for them I will gladly give to you."

So away he went, and sold several of his cattle. Afterward he returned to the secluded glen and counted out the gold pieces one by one into the wizard's hand. Then the wizard listened patiently to his story, and sent him off with a promise of speedy relief.

The grazier went to stay at his valley home until the next day. That very night, after he and his wife were in bed, and Barbara was delivering a lengthy lecture on his lack of breeding in snoring when a lady was speaking to him, a white figure ap-

peared at the bedside with a mirror in its hand.

"Barbara," the specter said, holding out the mirror for her to take, "this is to be yours henceforth, and I have come to tell you that you shall be restored to youth and beauty, which you yourself shall behold when you look into the mirror. But beware lest angry or vain words cross your lips. Such a lapse will be punished by hideous old age and infirmity."

So saying, the apparition vanished. Barbara lit a lamp and looked into the mirror. Sure enough, she was young and attractive again, and she spent all the remainder of the night gazing at her reflection.

Then the grazier was enabled to enjoy an unbroken sleep until morning, a thing he had not done in his own home for years. He had peace also on the morrow and ever after; for Barbara never allowed the mirror

to pass out of her possession, and it was a constant solace to her even to the day of her death.

IX

A TRAMP AND HIS SOUP

THERE was once a tramp who went plodding his way through a forest. The sun had set, and the darkness was increasing fast. Houses were few and far between, and he had almost lost hope of finding shelter for the night, when he saw a light on ahead. Soon he discovered that it came from a fire burning on a cottage hearth and shining through an open door.

"How nice it would be to warm myself before that fire, and to get a bite to eat," he thought. So he trudged along to the cottage, and was met at the door by an old woman.

"Good evening," the tramp said.

"Good evening," the woman responded.

"I don't remember having seen you before. Where do you come from?"

"East of the sun and west of the moon," he replied. "Now I'm on my way home. I have been all over the world with the exception of this parish."

"You must be a great traveler," the woman said. "What may be your business here?"

"I want shelter for the night," he replied.

"I thought as much," the woman said, "but you may as well trudge right along, for my husband is not at home, and our place is not an inn."

"My good woman," the tramp responded, "you must not be so hard-hearted. We are both human beings and should help one another."

"Help one another!" the woman exclaimed. "Help! Did you ever hear of such a thing? Who'll help me, do you think?

I haven't a morsel in the house. No, you'll have to look for quarters elsewhere."

But tramps are not the kind of persons who consider themselves beaten at the first rebuff. Although the old woman grumbled and complained, he went on begging like a starved dog, until at last she gave in, and he got permission to lie on the floor for the night.

He thanked her, and added, "Better on the floor without sleep, than suffer cold in woodland deep;" for this tramp was a merry fellow, and was always ready with a rhyme.

When he entered the house he could see that the woman was not as badly off as she had pretended, but was simply greedy and stingy. He made himself very agreeable, and asked her in his politest manner for something to eat.

"Where am I to get it?" the old woman

responded. "I haven't tasted a morsel myself the whole day."

"Poor old granny, you must be starving," the tramp said. "Well, then, I suppose I must ask you to have something with me."

"Have something with you!" the old woman said. "What have you to offer, I would like to know?"

The tramp replied: "He who far and wide doth roam sees many things not known at home; and he who many things has seen, has sharpened wits and senses keen. Better dead than lose one's head. Lend me a pot, granny."

The old woman was very curious to find out what he was going to do, and she brought him the pot.

He half filled it with water, put it on the fire and then blew with all his might till the flames leaped briskly round it. After that, he took a nail from his pocket, turned it

three times in his hand, and put it into the pot.

The woman stared with all her might. "What's that going to be?" she asked.

"Nail soup," the tramp answered, and began to stir the water with the porridge stick.

"Nail soup?" the woman repeated.

"Yes, nail soup," the tramp said.

The old woman had seen and heard a good deal in her time, but that anybody could make soup with a nail was a new idea to her. "That's something for poor people to know," she said. "I would like to learn how to make such soup."

"Well, if you want to learn to make it you only need to watch me," he told her, and went on stirring.

The old woman sat down on a low stool, with her hands clasping her knees, and watched him eagerly.

"This generally makes good soup," he

said, "but very likely it will be rather thin tonight, for I have been making soup the whole week with the same nail. If I only had a handful of oatmeal to put in, the soup would be all right. But what we have to go without, it's no use thinking more about."

"I believe I have a bit of meal somewhere," the old woman said. Then she fetched a dish of it from her pantry.

The tramp began putting the meal into the soup, and went on stirring, while the woman sat gazing now at him and then at the pot till her eyes nearly popped out of her head.

As he put in one handful after another he remarked: "This soup would be good enough for company if I only had a little salted beef and a few potatoes to add to it. Yes, it would be fit for gentlefolk, however particular they might be. But what we have

to go without, it's no use thinking more about."

When the old woman began to consider, it seemed to her that she had some potatoes, and perhaps a piece of salted beef as well. She went to the pantry, and sure enough, the potatoes and beef were there. So she brought them out, and gave them to the tramp, who went on stirring.

"This soup will be fine enough for the best people in the land," he declared, while she continued to eagerly watch him.

"Well, I never!" she exclaimed; "and just to fancy—all made with a nail."

"If I only had a little barley and a drop of milk to put in the pot, we could ask the king himself to have some of the soup," the tramp said; "for such soup he has every blessed evening. That I know, because I have been in service under the king's cook."

"Dear me! Ask the king to have some!

Well, well!" the old woman exclaimed, slapping her knees. She was quite awestruck at the tramp's grand connections.

"But what we have to go without, it's no use thinking more about," the tramp said.

Then she remembered she had a little barley; and as for milk, well, she wasn't quite out of that. So she went and fetched them.

The tramp kept on stirring, and the woman sat staring, one moment at him and the next at the pot. Presently the tramp took out the nail.

"Now we'll have a feast," he said. "But when the king and queen have this kind of soup, each of them always eats at least one sandwich with it. Besides, they have a cloth on the table at every meal. But what we have to go without, it's no use thinking more about."

By this time the old woman had begun to feel quite grand and fine, I can tell you; and

if sandwiches and a tablecloth were all that were needed to make the supper just as the king had it, she would supply them, or something just as good. She and the tramp would play at being king and queen.

So she put a cloth on the table, and brought out butter and cheese and smoked beef. When she finished, the table looked as if it was decked out for company.

Never before in her life had the old woman had such a magnificent feast, and never before had she tasted such soup; and just fancy, the soup was made with only a nail!

She was in a very merry humor at having learned so economical a way of making soup, and felt deeply grateful to the tramp for teaching her such a useful thing. They ate and drank until they were sleepy. Then the tramp was going to lie down on the floor.

"That will never do," the old woman

Making nail soup

thought. "No, it is impossible. Such an important person must have a bed to lie in."

He accepted the bed willingly enough, saying: "I feel just as if it were Christmas time. A nicer woman I never came across."

The next morning, when he woke, the first thing he got was a hot drink of coffee; and when he was leaving, the old woman gave him a bright silver dollar.

"Thanks, many thanks, for what you have taught me," she said. "Now that I have learned to make soup with a nail I shall live in comfort."

"Well," he responded, "making soup with a nail isn't very difficult, if you only have something good to add to it."

The woman stood at the door looking after him as he went his way. "Such people don't grow on every bush," she said.

X

BRUNO AND A MONSTER

A FISHERMAN sat watching his wife get ready a cake to bake in the oven. It was a rich and pretty cake with raisins inside and frosting on top. It was not just one for every day.

After a while the fisherman asked, "What are you making that for?"

"Surely," his wife said, "you haven't forgotten that tomorrow is our youngest boy's birthday. He will be thirteen. How the years pass!"

The husband suddenly grew pale. "I had forgotten," he murmured. "I had forgotten."

He sat by the fireside dejected and sad.

His face was hidden in his hands, and when he turned round she saw that he was shaken by sobs, and his tears were falling on the hearth.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "What has come over you?"

"You remember how poor we were before our youngest son, Bruno, was born," he responded. "We were often hungry. There seemed to be no fish left in the sea."

"I remember," she said, "but we've been well off now for many a year. What's the use of calling up old sorrows?"

"But did you never wonder how luck came to us so suddenly?" he asked.

"Yes," the woman answered, "I did at first, but I soon got used to the change."

"Well, listen," he said. "One day I was out in my boat thinking of you and the children with nothing to eat at home, and hardly a stick of furniture left. For a week

I had not caught a fish that would fetch a penny.

"Then out of the sea there rose a strange dark shape that called me by name, and asked: 'Why are you so thin and sad? What ails you?'

" 'Poverty, just poverty,' I answered.

" 'That can be cured,' it said. 'Your children shall never want for a good meal—on one condition.'

" 'What is the condition?' I demanded.

" 'I am always in need of stout lads,' the monster said. 'Promise to give me the next son born to you, and luck will be yours for the rest of your life. You have sons enough and to spare now. Besides, you can keep the boy I am asking for until he is thirteen years old.'

"Then again I thought of all the hardships we suffered, and I promised.

" 'Bring him here to the shore on his

thirteenth birthday,' the creature said, and vanished.

"Less than a year later our dear Bruno was born, and he is the best and handsomest of all our children. I dared not tell you of his fate. I have tried to forget it. But to-morrow he must go, for the monster will not forget. Ah me! Ah me!"

The mother wept and lamented, and next day she hid the boy. But the father found him, and took him along to the seashore. The fisherman feared that some terrible calamity would befall the household if he failed to keep his promise. He could not bear to see his son carried off. So he left him there without a word of farewell, and hurried back to his grief-stricken home.

Bruno was playing in his father's boat, never guessing the fate that hung over him, when out of the water there rose the fierce dark monster.

"Come with me, my child," it ordered.

But the lad looked the horrid creature in the face, and said: "Come with you? No!"

The monster was so much surprised that a young boy should resist it that it paused a moment before it put out its claws to clutch the boy and drag him down into the sea.

Just then the fairy princess, Aurelia, came walking along the shore. When she saw the stripling preparing to resist the black monster, she said: "That's a lad of spirit, and he deserves a kinder fate. He'd better serve me than that odious creature."

So she signed to an eagle who was in attendance on her, and the next moment Bruno was seized and carried to the fairy palace, which stood on a far-away seashore.

Think of the rage of the cheated monster! But it could do nothing, for its power was not as great as that of the fairy Aurelia.

XI

THE FAIRY AURELIA

In the fairy palace Bruno lived a busy merry life. Sometimes he waited on the princess, sometimes he played with the fairies. He rode, he hunted, and he learned all sorts of knightly exercises. Seven years passed, and he had grown to a tall, handsome, accomplished young man. Then the fairy Aurelia married him.

His happiness would have been perfect had it not been for a great longing to see his old home, and to share with his parents and brothers some of his good fortune. Aurelia guessed his wish, and told him he might go. Moreover, she gave him rich presents for his kinsfolk, and sent him off splendidly

clad. The greatest prince might have envied his spirited horse and fine equipage.

Just before he took leave of her she brought him one precious gift for himself. It was a magic ring with a glittering stone in it.

"Rub this ring," she said, "and whatever wish you make at the moment shall be granted. Hasten back, dear Bruno. Don't be gone over a month. And remember, all will go well with you on one condition, which is, that you must never boast of me. If you do, you will bitterly repent it."

Bruno promised, and away he went sped by the fairy's power so fast and far that he soon had not the least idea where her palace was. In his old village nobody knew him, but thought he was some great prince. Not even his mother knew him till he spoke of things that had happened in his childhood.

"And I thought you were devoured by a monster," she cried.

Now he gave them their presents, which were such things as they had never set eyes on before. By means of his magic ring he supplied his father with lands and a grand mansion. His mother ruled over a household of servants. His brothers were fine gallants with jeweled swords by their sides.

But all their joy was turned to sorrow when they learned that Bruno could make them only a short visit. Indeed, it was hard for him to tear himself away from them. But he thought of Aurelia and her commands and goodness, and he said farewell.

His horse knew the way back to the fairy palace and would have taken him there quickly and safely without being guided, had not Bruno presently heard a king's herald proclaim a great tournament. None but princes and knights of rare skill could

enter the lists, and the prize was the hand of the king's daughter, the Princess Claudia.

Of course Bruno did not want a wife. He already had the loveliest bride in the whole world. But he was tempted to show the court and the assembled princes what a clever fellow he was. So he entered the lists.

Each competitor had to mount his horse, and, while riding, throw his spear and pierce the eye of a wooden bird swung high in the air. Hundreds of expert knights made the attempt the first day, but only Bruno succeeded in piercing the bird's eye with the point of his spear. At the end of the contest he disappeared.

The same thing happened the next day. On the third he was again victor, but before he left the field, the soldier guards stopped him and led him to their royal master.

After complimenting him on his skill and modesty, the king said, "Now you shall have

your reward;" and he called the Princess Claudia to come forward.

He was just going to put her hand in that of the victor when Bruno withdrew a step, and said with a low bow: "Madam, I cannot accept this honor. I have a wife at home."

"Then why did you enter the lists?" the king cried. "You have mocked us. But no doubt you will be sufficiently punished by the necessity of going back to some miserable ugly creature whom you can never love again after having seen the beautiful lady whom you might have married."

"Your Majesty has, indeed, a lovely daughter," Bruno said, "but my wife surpasses her in beauty and every grace."

The words were out of his mouth before he remembered his vow never to boast of the fairy Aurelia, and with no thought of the effect they might have on those about him.

At once there was an uproar among his hearers. "Let us see her, if she is so beautiful!" they cried.

And the king's voice rose above the others, saying: "It is easy to make vain boasts. We command you to prove the truth of what you have said. Send for your wife. If she does not come in three days, you shall die."

"She lives a long way off," Bruno responded hesitatingly.

But the bystanders told him he was a liar, a braggart, and no true knight. So Bruno rubbed his ring, and said softly, "My dear princess, come to me without delay."

Aurelia got the message, but refused to come. For had he not broken his word? Instead, she sent her kitchen maid.

Suddenly the maid appeared before the assembled people, and the girl was so beautiful that there was a general cry of: "Oh!

he spoke the truth. What a lovely creature!"

But Bruno was indignant. "Pah!" he exclaimed, "that my lady? I should think not. That is my lady's kitchen-maid."

"What must his lady be like then?" the people said.

But the king was suspicious. He again accused Bruno of lying, and, as he turned to go to the palace, once more reminded him of the punishment that awaited him if he could not prove his boast.

Next day Bruno was brought again into the king's presence. He rubbed the ring hard, and said in a low pleading voice, "Aurelia, my princess, come to my help."

A few moments later a lady stood before the people, and every one gazed at her fascinated, she was so fair and graceful. "There she is at last!" they cried. "After all, he spoke the truth."

But Bruno cried out: "No, no, that's not my bride! That's my wife's goose-herd."

"If the goose-herd is like that, what must her mistress be?" the people murmured.

But the king spoke sternly, saying. "Have done with your boasting! Tomorrow is your last chance. If your wife does not come then, I will deliver you to the executioner. Guards, take him out of my presence."

Another day passed, and once more Bruno stood before the king. Not far away was a gallows that had been made ready for him. "Aurelia," he pleaded, "come to the help of your husband, whom death threatens;" and he rubbed the ring very hard.

Then appeared a lady of such dazzling beauty as the onlookers had never seen before. Not a sound could be heard, and the king sat motionless as a statue in his astonishment and admiration. There could be no doubt this time. It was Aurelia.

She walked to where Bruno stood, but instead of giving him the affectionate greeting he hoped for, she took the ring off his finger, and said: "You have broken your promise. Without this ring you cannot call me. I return to my palace. If you ever see me again, you will have to find me." So saying, she vanished.

XII

QUARRELING ROBBERS

THE fairy treated Bruno so brusquely that the king concluded she was not the youth's wife after all. So he called out to his guards: "Seize the imposter! To the gallows with him!"

But Bruno took to his heels. He slipped through the crowd like an eel, and by making use of all the agility he had learned in the fairy palace he got away. He escaped being hung, yet his situation was far from cheerful. His lady was offended. His ring was gone, and with it all his power. He was as poor as ever he had been, and he did not know in what part of the world to look for the fairy palace.

Nevertheless, he did not lose heart. He was determined to find Aurelia and to gain her forgiveness. So he trudged off along the highway. On and on he walked all day long, and day after day. He stopped every one he met, and asked the way to the palace of the Princess Aurelia. But all the answer he got was: "Never heard of such a person."

He asked men, he asked beasts, he asked birds. None of them could help him, yet he never once thought of giving up his search.

At last he chanced to come across two ruffians who were quarreling over a heap of things they had stolen. They couldn't agree about sharing the plunder. When they saw Bruno, who looked like an honest man, they asked him to judge between them.

He consented, and after examining the money and jewels he divided them as fairly as possible, and gave to each his portion.

"But that is not all," they said. "Here is a pair of shoes, and here is a mantle."

"Those don't seem worth much," Bruno remarked.

"Oh! but they are," the robbers declared. "The shoes are the famous Shoes of Swiftness. Whoever puts them on can go as fast as the wind. And whoever puts on the mantle cannot be seen. You can readily understand that such things would be very useful in our trade."

The trouble was each man wanted both. Again they asked Bruno to judge between them.

He did not much fancy the use they proposed to make of the things, and concluded to thwart their plans. "How can I judge unless I put the shoes and mantle on?" he asked. "I need to assure myself that they are as valuable as you say."

"Then put them on by all means," the

robbers told him. "Afterward you can decide fairly who shall have them."

So Bruno sat down and put on the shoes. As he rose he picked up the mantle and started to climb a hill that rose in a steep slope from where the robbers were. Up he went as if he had been the wind, and in a second was at the top far above the two rascals.

"The shoes are good," he shouted down.

"Now try the mantle," they cried, as they toiled up after him.

He fastened it about his shoulders, and asked, "Do you see me now?"

"No," they called out.

"Nor will you ever see me any more," Bruno said, and off he set in the Shoes of Swiftness and the magic mantle.

The robbers did not even know in what direction he went, though he passed them on his way down the hill to visit their heap

of stolen treasure, and pick up some money for his journey.

When the two robbers realized what had happened, they quarreled more violently than ever. Each laid the blame on the other. Soon they came to blows, and fought till they were black and blue. Afterward they separated in great wrath, and each went his own way.

XIII

THE FOUR WINDS

Bruno could now travel far and fast, but he knew no more than before the road back to his princess. And no matter where he went the people he questioned were no better informed. His was a weary life.

One evening he met an old woman who looked very tousled and weather-beaten. "Good evening," he said. "Do you know whether the Princess Aurelia lives in this region?"

"What should I know of princesses?" she grumbled.

"Well then," he said, "perhaps you can give me some supper and a lodging for the night. I am tired and hungry."

"You will have to go elsewhere," the old woman told him. "The place in which I live belongs to my four sons, and they would not welcome you."

"But have pity, my good woman," he pleaded. "I have traveled a thousand miles since morning."

"Oh! that's nothing," she commented. "Many a day my sons travel that far or farther. Now don't keep me talking. I must hurry home to get their supper ready. If they saw you talking to me they might tear you in pieces. My sons are wild and terribly strong."

Bruno slipped on his mantle, and said, "Do you see me?"

"No," she answered. "Where have you gone to?"

"I'm right here," he said. "I have the power to make myself invisible. Your sons won't see me unless I please. So you can

be quite certain that you run no risk if you let me go with you."

"All right," she agreed, and took him to her home, which was a big cavern on a hillside.

She gave him food, and after he had eaten he sat down in a corner to rest. Soon he heard strange sounds of puffing and panting and sighing and blowing. Then he felt sudden drafts of air striking on his face from this side and that. The sand on the cavern floor whirled about, and Bruno had to tuck his mantle well around him lest it should be blown off and he should be seen.

He wondered what was happening, and was so alarmed that he scarcely dared peep out of his corner. But presently talking began, and he knew who the old woman's sons were. They were the four winds.

"Good evening, my sons," the old woman said. "Are you all here?"

"I'm here," the North Wind replied, "and so is the West Wind. The others are coming. What a smell of human flesh!"

"Human flesh? Nonsense!" the old woman said. "It's your supper you smell."

Then there was more puffing and panting, and in came the East and South Winds, hustling each other in the doorway.

"What a smell of human flesh!" the South Wind cried. "If I could get my teeth into it!"

"I know what you smell," the old woman interrupted as she put the supper on the table. "A man passed by this evening. He asked the way to the palace of the Princess Aurelia."

"Did he?" the North Wind remarked. "Well, he'll wear out many pairs of shoes before he gets there."

The winds sat down and began to eat. "Every wind that blows knows the Princess

Aurelia's palace," the East Wind affirmed. "Only last week I was knocking at the doors and windows myself."

"I had a look in there this very morning," the West Wind said. "The princess isn't what she used to be. She is wasting away."

"What is the matter with her?" the old woman asked.

"People say she's lost her husband," the West Wind replied. "She'll die if he doesn't come back."

"Yes, that is so," the South Wind agreed. "Yesterday I tried a little jest on her. I whirled her curtains about, and tossed the curls on her forehead. But I couldn't get a smile out of her. She's in a poor way. Well, I shall be going there again to-morrow, and I'll see if she is still alive."

After supper the winds lay down along the sides of the cavern and went to sleep. Bruno lay down too, but thoughts of what

he had heard kept him awake. It seemed to him as if the night would never come to an end.

XIV

BRUNO'S RETURN

MORNING came at last, and the winds shook themselves awake and ate breakfast. Then Bruno heard the South Wind say: "Farewell, mother, I'm off for my day's work."

Bruno at once darted out of the cavern, pulled off his mantle, and was standing at the door when the South Wind came forth. "Good morning, your Windship," he said. "I'd be glad of your company on the road. I'm seeking the palace of the Princess Aurelia, and I expect you to show me the way."

How the South Wind laughed! A mere man to talk of keeping company with a wind! He laughed and laughed till Bruno

was nearly blown over. Then he said: "Here I go. Come after me, if you can."

Bruno put on his mantle and shouted: "Not after you. With you!"

And his shoes were as good as the wings of the wind. Over hill and dale, over plain and forest he kept pace, till he came to the palace which he knew so well on the far seashore. He had feared he would never see it again.

"At last!" Bruno exclaimed.

"Oh! you're there," the South Wind said.

Bruno cast off his mantle; and there he was.

"But you're not inside the palace yet," the Wind said. "If the lions that guard the entrance catch a glimpse of you, you'll be only a mouthful to them."

"They won't see me," Bruno declared, and he put on his mantle once more.

A moment later his magic shoes had taken

him into the palace, and he went upstairs to the princess's chamber. She was lying on the bed, pale and weak. Her servant had put down a basin of broth beside her, but she would not taste a drop.

"That smells good," Bruno thought. He took it up, and gulped it down. To keep pace with the wind gives one an appetite.

"Who has eaten my broth?" Aurelia said.

Her maid presently came in and exclaimed to herself: "Dear me! she has eaten it all. She must be much better."

Then the maid hurried out to fetch more food, and she returned with some chicken, jelly, and grapes, which she set down on the table by the bedside. But in a few moments they were gone and only the empty plates were left.

The maid cried out in alarm, and Aurelia said: "Some very hungry person is hiding

in my room. I can think of nobody with such an appetite except my dear Bruno, whom I shall never see again. Ah me! Ah me."

Then Bruno cast off his mantle, and knelt by the bedside, saying: "My princess, I have traveled the world over to find you. Never a day have I stopped on the road. Will you forgive me?"

She rose from her bed exclaiming, "Bruno, Bruno! I have not had a moment's peace and happiness since we parted."

They embraced and laughed and cried. The roses at once came back to Aurelia's face, and she regained her health and beauty. Hand in hand they went downstairs, summoned the household and told the great news.

"Tomorrow we shall give a great feast to all our subjects," the princess said. And messengers were dispatched north, south,

east, and west to distribute the invitations far and wide.

"But the lions at your gate will frighten our guests," Bruno told her.

Aurelia rubbed her ring; and in came the lions and crouched at her feet.

"I only gave them back their fierceness while I lay ill," she said, "and the palace lacked my protection and yours. Henceforth they are your docile servants."

Then they fawned on Bruno, and they recognized him as their master from that moment.

"Have you no friends to invite to the feast?" Aurelia asked.

"I would like to see my parents and my brothers," he replied.

She rubbed the ring, and lo! Bruno's kinsfolk were all about him. They were the chief guests at the great feast on the morrow.

They feasted, they danced, so brave and so fine—
Now tell me your story, I've told you mine.

The lazy giant and his horse

XV

THE LAZY GIANT

ONCE upon a time King Finn of Ireland and his companions went hunting. They put up their tents on a level spot near the summit of a hill, and unleashed their graceful hounds to run through the woods and sloping glens. It was sweet music in the king's ears to hear the cry of the dogs as they routed the deer from their covers and the badgers from their dens, and he delighted to hear the whistling and signaling of the huntsmen.

By and by he sat down with Fergus, the poet, to play a game of chess, and Conan, Angus, and Croida stood looking on. While the game was still in progress, they saw a

giant coming toward the hill leading a horse.

The giant was soon near enough for them to see that he was the ugliest-looking creature they had ever set eyes on. His body was fat, his legs crooked and clumsy, his hands and arms bony and strong, his lips thick, and his face covered with bushy hair.

He was fully armed, but all his weapons were rusty and soiled. A rough and battered shield hung over his back, and he had a heavy sword at his side. In his left hand he held two broad-headed spears, and in his right hand an iron club which he dragged along after him tearing up a track as deep as the furrow a farmer plows with a yoke of oxen.

His horse was a fitting companion in size and ugliness. He was covered all over with scraggy brown hair, and you could count his ribs and the knobs of every bone in his lean

body through his rough hide. Every now and then the beast tried to stop, and the giant struck him on the ribs with the big club a blow that sounded like the thundering of a great billow against a rocky coast.

The giant came straight to where the king was, and on bended knee saluted him with great respect.

"I am known as the lazy giant," he said. "I have no home, but am continually wandering about from one country to another. In my wanderings I have often heard of your greatness and royal bounty, O king, and I have come to ask you to take me into your service."

"Well," Finn responded, "there is not much to praise in your appearance, or to attract me in what you have to say of yourself. But I never yet have refused to take any man into my service, and I will not turn you away."

"Very good," the giant said, "and now I'll let my horse graze among yours yonder. It would grieve me very much were any harm to befall him, and I put him under the protection of all who are here present."

His concern for the miserable old skeleton of a horse made his hearers burst out laughing. Howbeit, the giant gave not the least heed to their merriment. He took the halter off the horse's head and turned him in among the other horses.

Then the wretched animal, instead of beginning to browse, began to work all sorts of mischief. He cocked his long switchy tail straight out like a rod, and kicked on this side and that with his rear legs; and he went tearing through the drove butting whatever horse came in his way with his hard bony head, or biting with his sharp teeth so that not one of them was safe before or behind him.

Presently he started across a boggy space to where Conan had his horses grazing by themselves. "Giant!" Conan shouted, springing up in great alarm, "catch your horse and prevent his doing any more mischief. If you don't, I will go and knock the brains out of the vicious old brute."

"The halter lies here on the ground," the lazy giant said. "Take it and bring my horse away, if you choose."

Conan was in a mighty rage at this response, but he snatched up the halter and ran and threw it over the animal's head. When he attempted to lead the creature away a new difficulty developed. The horse stood stock still, and though Conan pulled and tugged with all his strength, he could not make him move a single inch.

Fergus the poet and a considerable number of the other men came to where the horse was, and Fergus said to Conan: "Would it

not be better for you to mount the brute? Then you could revenge yourself for the trouble he is giving you by riding him across the country through all sorts of rough places till you have tamed his spirit."

"That's a very good plan," Conan agreed.

So he jumped on the horse's back and began to beat him stoutly with his heels and fists. But the horse seemed not to take the least notice and never stirred.

"I know the reason he does not go," Fergus said. "He is used to carrying a man far heavier than you, Conan, and he will not move until he has a weight on his back equal to that of the giant."

At this, Conan called to his onlooking friends and asked which of them would mount with him and help him avenge the damage done to their horses.

"I will go," Croida responded.

Others said the same, and they climbed

onto the horse until fifteen sat astride his peaked ridge.

XVI

THE FIFTEEN RIDERS

The fifteen men who had mounted the big horse all began to thrash their steed with might and main, yet not a step would he go.

When the lazy giant saw them beating his horse at such a rate, he said to the king: "The fine accounts I heard of you and your men are false. I will not stay in your service—no, not another hour. You can see for yourself the ill usage these men are giving my horse. The time is indeed short since I entered your service, but I now think it has been a great deal too long. I will seek another master."

So saying, the lazy giant stood up and started off down the hill. The moment the

horse saw his master leaving, he stirred himself and walked after the giant, taking the fifteen men along on his back. Their comrades raised a loud shout of laughter at the sight.

The vagabond giant had not gone far when he looked back and saw his horse following. At once he tucked up his skirts and changed his pace. He set out with long active strides, and if you know the speed of a flying swallow you can understand the swiftness of the giant as he ran. The horse plunged and bounded along keeping close behind. His riders tried to throw themselves off, and were dismayed to find themselves firmly fastened to the creature's bony ridge.

Conan shouted back to King Finn asking if he was content to let his friends be carried off in that manner by such a horrible old specter of a horse. Then the king and the

rest seized their weapons and started in pursuit.

On and on went the horse and his master, and they did not pause even when they came to the sea. Their pursuers had to seek for a ship, but were not long delayed. Finn and his men went on board a swift vessel, whose skillful pilot kept close on the track of the lazy giant until they came to a vast craggy cliff towering up from the sea into the clouds.

The pilot said that the trail of the giant led up the face of this cliff, and the voyagers thought they would have to abandon their quest and go home. They were looking up at the cliff with sorrow and vexation when Angus said he would try to climb it, and climb it he did.

After a time he returned with the news that he had followed the trail of the giant and his horse across the summit to where

they had gone down the steep precipice on the other side.

So round to that side the ship sailed, and went on from island to island and from bay to bay until the voyagers arrived at the Land of Promise. There they learned that they had been pursuing Avarta, the king of that country. By magic art he had taken the form of the lazy giant, gone to Ireland with his scarecrow horse, and brought away the fifteen men.

Avarta feared the Irish king and had no desire to provoke a war. Therefore he invited the pursuers to a feast of joy and friendship in his palace, and they accepted the invitation.

At this feast they and their lost companions met and embraced each other. For three days the company ate, drank, and was merry. Then King Finn told his host that he bore him no ill will, and only asked that

the men he had carried off should be released.

But Conan was not so easily satisfied. "Little have you endured, O Finn, in this matter," he said. "If you, like us, had suffered from the rough carcass of the lazy giant's monstrous horse in the long journey from Erin to the Land of Promise, you would demand some compensation."

Those who had seen the fifteen men carried off could scarcely keep from laughing as they recalled the plight of the riders.

"What compensation would you demand?" Avarta asked Conan.

"Well," Conan said, "I would require you to choose fifteen of your noblest men, and cause them to mount the big horse. Then you, in the form of the lazy giant, should lay hold of his tail and fare to Erin by the same course the horse took in coming hither—through the same thick woods,

through the same surging seas, and over the same wild rocky islands."

Avarta promised that all this should be done. Then Finn and his comrades went away. They made the long voyage safely, and presently were back at their old hillside camping-place.

About that time Avarta chose his men, and had them mount the big horse. Then he caught hold of the creature's tail, and away they went.

One day the company on the hill saw, afar off, coming in their direction at great speed, the lazy giant and his horse, as ugly as ever. They laughed heartily at the plight of the horse's fifteen riders.

When the horse reached the spot where he had started with his former load of fifteen men the riders began to dismount. Suddenly the lazy giant stepped forward and pointed earnestly toward the hilltop.

Finn and those with him were startled. They all turned to look, but nothing was to be seen except a few of their horses quietly browsing. Then they faced about to question the lazy giant. Great was their surprise to find that he and his horse and men had all vanished; and Finn and his chiefs never saw them afterward.

XVII

A CAPTIVE MERMAID

ONE fine April afternoon a fisherman, whose name was Pergrin, was rowing in his boat near the wild Welsh coast. He looked up at the cliffs and thought he saw a maiden in a recess of the rocks.

Pergrin was an inquisitive man, and he determined to find out what the lady was doing in that lonely place. He rowed to the shore as quietly as he could, stepped out of the boat, and crept up to a place where he could see into the recess without being seen himself.

From there he espied a lovely mermaid. She was human above the waist, but below the waist was a fish with scales and a spread-

ing tail. So busy and intent was she combing her long hair that she did not suspect she was being watched.

After gazing at her for a long time Pergrin decided to capture her. So he made a sudden rush, took her up in his arms, and carried her off to his boat. After fastening her in it securely, he turned his boat's prow toward home, and began to ply his oars vigorously.

When she realized her situation, she wept and begged Pergrin to let her go. He answered her very kindly, but would not grant her tearful request. Instead, he carried her to his home and shut her up in a room.

He treated her with courtesy and tenderness, yet she refused all meat and drink and did nothing but shed tears and beseech Pergrin to release her. Pergrin was softhearted, and the sight of the beauteous mermaid's eyes getting red, and her nose

swollen with constant drip of salt tears, affected him deeply. Moreover, as she persistently declined food, she became thin and freakish.

At last she said to him: "If you will let me go, I will shout your name thrice and warn you in the time of your greatest need."

"Very well," Pergrin responded, "if you cannot be content here with me I will set you free."

So he carried her down to the shore, put her in the water, and she swam away.

Days and weeks passed without Pergrin's seeing her after this. But one hot sunny mid-day he was out fishing in his boat, and many other fishermen were similarly engaged. The sea was calm, and there was not a cloud in the sky, so that no one had any thought of danger.

Suddenly the mermaid emerged out of the blue sunlit water, and shouted, "Pergrin,

Pergrin, Pergrin, take up your net, take up your net!"

Pergrin wasted no time. He drew in his net with great haste, and rowed homeward amid the jeers of the rest of the fishermen. He had hardly reached the entrance to the harbor when a dread storm overspread the sea. The wind blew furiously, and the waves ran mountain high. Pergrin reached land safely, but all the other fishermen, eighteen in number, were drowned.

XVIII

THE GRAINS OF RICE

In the days when the world was young things were very different from what they are now. The men and women were stronger and more beautiful, and the fruit of the trees was larger and sweeter, and the grains of rice were far bigger than they ever grow at present. Indeed, a single grain of rice was enough for a man's dinner in those early times.

Better still, the people never had to toil gathering the rice, for when it was ripe the grains fell from the stalks and rolled into the villages and they kept on rolling, around corners and up hill and down, until they were in the granaries. There they stayed

until the people took them out to sell, or to use for food in their homes.

One year, when the rice grains had grown bigger and more plentiful than ever before, a widow who owned some great rice fields, said to her daughter: "Our granaries are too small. We must pull them down and build larger."

"I will have the men start the work tomorrow," the daughter responded.

The next day she called their laborers together, and said: "Our granaries will not hold the rice crop this year. Tear them down, and build new ones that will be twice as large."

"I am afraid there is not time," the chief laborer objected. "The grain is already nearly ripe."

"You have heard my orders," the young woman said. "I did not come to you for advice."

"Very well," the man assented, "we will do our best."

He and the other workers were soon busy tearing down the granaries. That did not take long, but the task of putting up big new buildings was much slower and more difficult. Day after day the men sawed and hewed and hammered, and every day the widow and her daughter came to see how the work progressed.

At last the granaries were nearly finished. "In one day more they will be ready," the widow said as she looked at them.

"They would be ready now if our laborers only worked as fast as they ought to work," the daughter remarked fretfully.

"We have done our best," the chief laborer said gently, "and no man can do more than that."

Just then the first one of the great ripe rice grains came rolling in from the fields.

It rolled right toward the widow and her daughter, where they stood in the doorway of a granary. This made the widow angry, and she cried out to the slowly approaching grain: "Do you not see that the work here is still going on? Could you not wait in the fields until we were ready?"

The grain of rice did not stop. "When we are ripe and fall from the stalks," it said, "we have to roll to the granaries."

"You should not bother us now when you are not wanted!" the widow retorted.

She stooped, picked up a stick and struck the advancing rice grain with all her might. Her blow broke it into hundreds of pieces, and the pieces said, "From this time forth we will wait in the fields until we are wanted."

Ever since then the rice has been small of grain, and the people have to harvest it where it grows and carry it thence to the granaries with much labor.

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